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SB 96 (Murray)

Peer-to-Peer networks: file sharing software

ISSUE:

Peer-to-peer (P2P) software allows users to connect to an anonymous online network of other computers to share and copy music, software, movies and pictures from any other computer that is hooked into that network. While there are certain legitimate uses of P2P, many people use these networks for illegal activity. It is estimated that over 90% of all transactions conducted on P2P networks are of an illegal nature.

Due to the high-level of anonymity, P2P software is not just used to steal music and movies, but it is used by criminals to trade stolen financial information, plant computer viruses and seek out and disseminate child pornography. While most law enforcement agencies around the state have a "high-tech" unit or task force, the huge numbers of P2P users and electronic transactions make enforcement extremely difficult.

Recently, several companies have developed technology that could be used to block the trades of illegal materials, prevent illegal material from being distributed and crack-down on "high-tech" crime.

SOLUTION:

This bill would require anyone who sells, disseminates or advertises using P2P software to incorporate available filtering technology within the P2P application itself. Since it has been nearly impossible to prevent criminal activity on P2P networks by simply educating the users, requiring the use of this filtering technology would prevent the commission of millions of online crimes.

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Senator Kevin Murray.